

A study to see the effect of gender and working status on death anxiety

DR. LOKESHWARI RATHORE

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,

B.N.UNIVERSITY UDAIPUR.

Abstract;

Human faces the reality of death. Regardless of status or wish to live longer or not, the reality of death is present in everyone's life. Everyone must, at some point, sees death as a part of life. Data for the present study was collected using purposive random sampling method and was carried out to find the impact of gender and working status on death anxiety. The area of study was confined to Udaipur district of Rajasthan. 60 subjects were selected out of which 30 males and 30 females, the age group was taken under consideration was 25-45 years. The result revealed that females have significantly higher level of death anxiety as compared to males; non working samples have shown higher level of death anxiety as compared to working samples.

Key words: death anxiety, gender, working status.

Introduction:

Death anxiety (Thanatophobia) is defined as a feeling of dread, apprehension or solicitude when one thinks of what happens after death, the process of dying, or ceasing to be. Death is defined as a state of non-being, the termination of biological and social life. Belskey (1999) define "death anxiety" as the thoughts, fears, and emotions about that final event of neither living that we experience under more normal condition of life.

Death anxiety refers to the fear and apprehension of one's own death. It is the neurotic fear of loss of the self which, in intense state, parallels feelings of helplessness and depression. Man's awareness of his own death produces anxiety that can be dealt with by recognizes one's own individuality.

Kuber (1969) had found that in the majority of person, almost regardless of age the person reaction to imminent death pass through five phases – denial, anger, although bargaining, not every depression individual and acceptance the final achieves phases. Dying and death, like other major aspects of human life, are also very important cultural and social phenomena. The death can be fully understood only if it is viewed as one of the central meanings of human existence. An idea of the centrality of one's own death can be gathered if individual could be made to contemplate seriously the possibility of their own death (Mc Carth, 1980). Life and death are required as day and night, cold and heat, light and darkness. The world without life is meaningless in the same way God's plan would have been incomplete without death. Life is positive while death is negative. What we call death is the imagination without existence. The very name death terrifies many people.

As death is the final stage of life cycle, it can be approached naturally by dying individual and their families.

Death and dying can be seen as part of the life process or they can be viewed as a dramatic, painful tortured experience both for the person and the families. Even though death most commonly occurs in later years, it may happen at any stage in life. Accidents and suicides are the major causes of death among younger persons, and continue to be so in later years, although their relative significance declines. Awareness of mortality and fear of death have been part of human condition throughout recorded history.(Eshbaugh and Henninger, 2013, Furer and Walker , 2008, Yalom ,2008). Not surprisingly death has the power to evoke fears of powerlessness, separation, loss of control and

meaninglessness.(Noyes et al., 2002, Stolorow , 1979, Yalom, 2008). Thorson and Powell (1984) did a study to investigate this connection, and they sampled men and women from 16 years of age to over 60. The Death Anxiety Scale showed higher mean scores for women than for men. Moreover, researchers believe that age and culture could be major influences in why women score higher on death anxiety scales than men.

Kimberly DeRate Chelgren (2000) in his study examined the predictive role of gender and psychological separation in the death anxiety of young adults. A total death anxiety score and eight psychological dependency scores, four for mom and four for dad, were obtained from male and female participants between the ages of 17 and 26 years old. Females were found to have significantly higher total death anxiety than were males. Females also had significantly higher emotional dependency on mom than did males.

Objective:

The objective of the present study was to see the effect of gender and working status on death anxiety.

Hypothesis:

1. There is no effect of gender on death anxiety.
2. There is no effect of working status on death anxiety.

Material required and Methodology:

To access the death anxiety level of the subjects Death Anxiety Scale by was used. The data for the present study was collected using purposive random sampling method and was carried out to find the impact of gender and working status on death anxiety. The geographical area of study was confined to Udaipur district of Rajasthan. 60 subjects were selected out of which 30 males and 30 females, the age group was taken under consideration was 25-45 years.

Research design:

2*2 factorial design was used in the present study.

Variables:

Independent variable:

- Gender
- Working status

Dependent variable:

- Death anxiety

Analysis of data: The scores obtained on the test D.A.S. were analyzed statistically. Measures of central tendency and variability were calculated to see the effect of independent variable on dependent variable. ANOVA was calculated wherever it is required.

Ethical considerations:

Proper consent of the respondents was taken before commencement of the experiment. Confidentiality was strictly observed on the responses.

Result and discussion:

The objective of present study was to see the effect of gender and mental health on death anxiety. Death anxiety is called as fear of death and is named as (Thanatophobia).

Here from table 1 we can conclude that mean for female respondents is 5.53 and standard deviation for female respondents is 1.92. Whereas the mean for male respondents is 4.81 and standard are 2.03. It is clearly noticed that females have higher level of death anxiety as compared to their male counterparts. The

study reveals that the level of death anxiety is comparatively higher in females as compared to their counterparts.

Death anxiety is an attitude that an individual holds towards death. It is defined as a negative and apprehensive feeling that one has when thinking about death and dying (Richardson et al., 1983) and is used interchangeably with fear of death (Feifel & Nagy, 1981; Wink & Scott, 2005).

Moorhead et al., (2008), also defined death anxiety as “Vague uneasy feeling of discomfort or dread generated by perceptions of a real or imagined threat to one’s existence”

Thorson and Powell (1984) did a study to investigate this connection, and they sampled men and women from 16 years of age to over 60. The Death Anxiety Scale showed higher mean scores for women than for men. Moreover, researchers believe that age and culture could be major influences in why women score higher on death anxiety scales than men.

Kimberly DeRate Chelgren (2000) in his study examined the predictive role of gender and psychological separation in the death anxiety of young adults.

A study done by Mohammad A. Soleimani et al.(2016) on cancer patients revealed that low quality of life increases the level of death anxiety.

Table 1: Showing results for Gender on Death Anxiety

Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation
Male	4.81	1.92
Female	5.53	2.03
Total	10.34	3.95

The differences in the median values among the treatment groups are great enough and data is statistically significant at(p< .001)

Chart 1

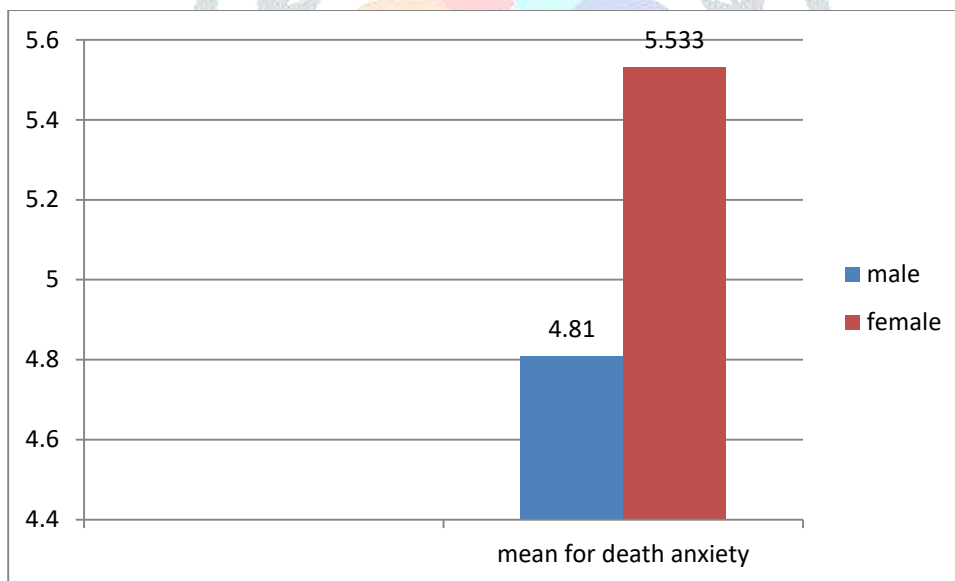
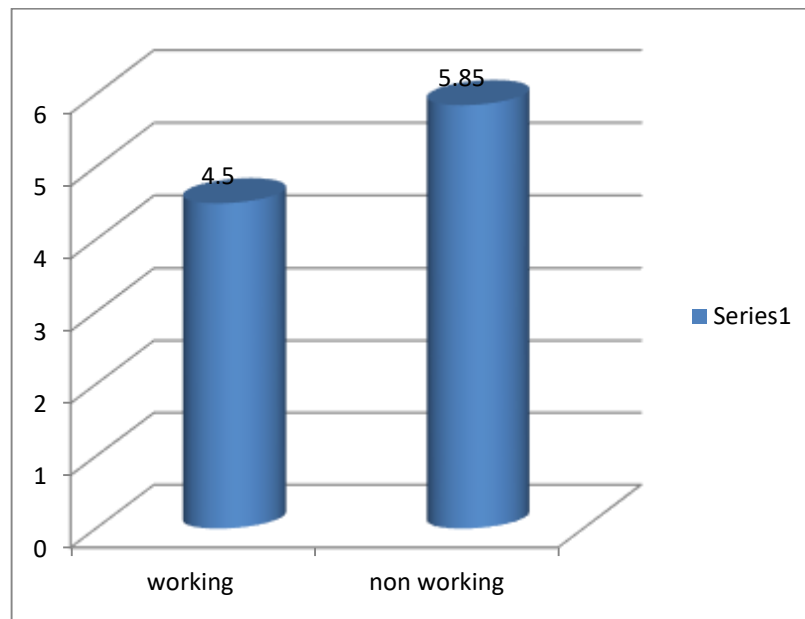


Table 2 Showing Mean and S.D. for Working Status on Death Anxiety

Working status	Mean	Standard deviation
Working	4.45	1.97
Non Working	5.85	1.99
Total	10.30	3.96

The differences in the median values among the treatment groups are great enough and data is statistically significant at(p< .001)

Chart 2 showing mean for working status on death anxiety



It is found in the study that female respondents have high level of death anxiety as compared to their male counterparts. Working respondents have low level of death anxiety as compared to non working respondents. The results revealed that female respondents are more worried about death related fear, which includes physical loss, emotional outburst, loss of near and dear one, feeling of loneliness, females are some where worried about their children and family as they are bothered about the discomfort and problems that are going to be faced by the family in case of their physical loss, males on the other hand remain on practical side hence are bit apart on emotional ground this could be the reason that female respondents have high level of death anxiety as compared to their counterparts.

The result table 2 reveals that the mean score for working respondents is 4.45 and mean score for non working respondents is 5.85. The reason could be the working people have to deal with many stressors at a time; they get physically and mentally ready for many stressors, which they meet across daily. They are more open for the new adventures, rather than those who remain at home or are unemployed as they are not exposed to many stressors that may include daily life hassles; they feel more bounded with the liabilities for others as they have the tendency to get into others life as they have no other job to do. This decreases their capacity of taking risk hence this group of respondents have shown high level of death anxiety. Our results gets support from the study done by Kastenbaum(2000), Yalom (2008) , human beings are thought to develop adaptive methods for coping with death anxiety, period of heightened stress or threats to health of self or loved ones can results in inefficient and pathological modes of coping for some individuals.

It rejects our hypothesis that independent variable gender has no effect on dependent variable death anxiety and independent variable working status has no effect on dependent variable death anxiety.

Conclusion:

It can be concluded that female respondents have high level of death anxiety as compared to their counterparts.

Non working respondents have high level of death anxiety as compared working respondents.

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